



General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

Distr.: General

4 January 2017

Original: English

Fifth Committee

Summary record of the 21st meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 14 December 2016, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. Pretterhofer (Vice-Chair) (Austria)
*Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Sene

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16-20801 (E)



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In the absence of Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Mr. Pretterhofer (Austria), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 152: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (A/71/599 and A/71/676)

1. **Ms. Bartsiotas** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised budget for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (A/71/599), said that the Security Council, in its resolution 2284 (2016), had extended the mandate of UNOCI for a final period, until 30 June 2017. The revised budget of \$178.9 million for the 2016/17 period provided for the withdrawal and closure of UNOCI and represented an increase of \$25.8 million compared with the commitments of approximately \$153 million authorized by the General Assembly for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2016 in its resolution 70/272.

2. **Mr. Sene** (Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/71/676), said that the Committee's recommendations, which took into account, inter alia, the phased withdrawal of UNOCI personnel, the closure of the Operation by the end of the 2016/17 period, and the appropriations and actual expenditures for the 2015/16 period, would entail a reduction of \$2,986,000 in the proposed requirements for operational costs set out in the revised budget for UNOCI. The Advisory Committee welcomed the activities undertaken to ensure the phased withdrawal, handover and liquidation of the Operation and urged the Secretary-General to complete the withdrawal and closure processes, as requested in Security Council resolution 2284 (2016).

3. Noting that a provision of \$4.95 million was requested in respect of scale-up activities and programming of the United Nations country team to be carried out during the withdrawal and closure of UNOCI, he trusted that more detailed information on project governance and reporting would be provided to the General Assembly. Lastly, the Operation must ensure a timely and appropriate closure process in compliance with all applicable regulations and rules, drawing on lessons learned from other closed operations, particularly with regard to environmental clearance.

4. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the revised budget represented a decrease of 55.6 per cent in comparison with the appropriation for 2015/16. The Group would carefully examine the budget proposal together with the recommendations of the Advisory Committee with a view to ensuring that adequate resources were made available to facilitate drawdown and closure activities, particularly relating to settlement of outstanding claims, support for the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, training, assets disposal and communications infrastructure.

5. The Group noted with appreciation the ongoing training and capacity-building activities aimed at enhancing the professional competencies of UNOCI staff, particularly national staff members, as well as the job fairs organized to facilitate the transition of staff to careers in related agencies. It would also seek further information on the efforts made to comply with relevant rules and regulations, particularly the United Nations environmental and waste management policy and procedures, in line with the General Assembly's request in its resolution 70/286.

6. **Ms. Grant** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that, in a context of growing global crises, it was rare for the Committee to consider a final budget request for a peacekeeping operation. The example of UNOCI proved that peacekeeping operations could help countries to successfully regain stability following a conflict.

7. She paid tribute to those who had lost their lives while serving in peacekeeping missions, in particular UNOCI; their sacrifice was testament to the practical significance of the Committee's deliberations. She expressed gratitude to troop-contributing countries and personnel for their excellent work since the start of the Operation in 2004.

8. The revised budget proposal provided for the completion of all operational activities by 30 April 2017 and the final closure of the mission by 30 June 2017, as set out in Security Council resolution 2284 (2016). Her delegation would examine the proposed budget to verify its conformity with the principle of budgetary discipline and to ensure that resources were used in an efficient, effective and transparent manner, with a view to enabling the efficient and responsible

closure of the mission and the completion of its mandate.

9. In line with her delegation's commitment to environmental protection, and following on the success of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Secretary-General, the Secretariat and Member States must strive to reduce the environmental footprints of peacekeeping missions. She therefore trusted that the Operation would be closed in an environmentally responsible manner.

10. **Mr. Bouah-Kamon** (Côte d'Ivoire) noted with regret that the Committee was taking up the current agenda item late in the session, which precluded in-depth consideration of the final proposed budget for UNOCI.

11. By its resolution 2284 (2016), the Security Council had extended the Operation's mandate in the light of the satisfactory progress made in ensuring stability, security, democracy and economic prosperity in Côte d'Ivoire, while emphasizing the work remaining in the areas of national reconciliation and social cohesion. The revised budget, which provided for the withdrawal and closure of UNOCI in its final year of operation, as well as continued support for the various processes involved in peacekeeping, should be given due attention by the Committee.

12. UNOCI must have the necessary resources to tackle remaining challenges in its final phase. His delegation would focus in particular on the transfer to his Government and the United Nations country team in Côte d'Ivoire of responsibility for addressing the issues remaining after the mission's drawdown; national reconciliation and social cohesion; security-related matters and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, particularly in respect of remaining ex-combatants; the successful reinsertion of local staff after the closure of UNOCI, including through training activities and job fairs; and strict compliance with environmental standards during the closure process.

13. The Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire were grateful to UNOCI and other partners for their tireless efforts and support, which had made possible the mission's withdrawal following the return of peace and stability to the country. The achievements made during its 13 years of deployment in Côte d'Ivoire would consolidate the Operation's legacy as a success story in the history of peacekeeping missions.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.